



CITIZENS LEAGUE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION NOW
5120 Woodway, Suite 9004 • Houston, TX 77056

OFFICE OF THE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

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RECEIVED

October 18, 2007

Administrator Stephen Johnson
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.
Washington, DC. 20460

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Re: Environmental Justice Petition; Port of Houston emissions of benzene and 1,3 butadiene

Dear Administrator Johnson:

The enclosed Petition bears the signatures of over 600 citizens of Harris County and the surrounding areas, calling for the EPA to enact standards regulating acceptable levels of benzene and 1,3 butadiene in the ambient environment. Children in proximity to the Houston Ship Channel experience an unacceptably increased risk for developing lymphocytic leukemia, based on major industrial hazardous air pollutants (HAPS) from emission sources nearby. No regulation currently exists for the massive amounts of these known carcinogens in the ambient environment.

[REDACTED] was diagnosed with lymphocytic leukemia [REDACTED]. In the first study of this type analyzing the relationship between HAPS and the incidence of cancer in Harris County, the University of Texas School of Public Health, at the direction of the City of Houston Health Department, recently confirmed that children living within two miles of the Houston Ship Channel have a 56% higher risk of developing the disease than children who live more than 10 miles from the Houston Ship Channel.

Benzene and 1,3 butadiene rank in the top 40 chemicals for production volume and are used to make synthetic rubber and plastics. These specific HAPS are two of the top seven air toxics identified, in a probabilistic human health risk screening study released by the Mayor's Task Force in the spring of 2006, as posing a definite risk to human health in Houston. These chemicals are found in high concentration in the Houston Ship Channel area. The link between leukemia and 1,3 butadiene exposure association found in the University of Texas School of Public Health study is consistent with and supports the findings of many previous studies in other geographic regions. As the authors of the study have noted, it underscores and supports the need for control of HAPS in ambient air.

Children are powerless to choose where they live. It is up to us to protect them from these killer environmental hazards. So far, the Texas state legislature has failed to pass either of two bills governing toxic air emissions, and the City of Houston's efforts to regulate by ordinance have also met with opposition. Accordingly, right now it remains up to the EPA. CLEAN, the Marroquin family, and the 600-plus signatories on the enclosed Petition, demand that the EPA immediately enforce the reduction of benzene, 1, 3-butadiene and other carcinogenic emissions.

Sincerely,

Rosario Marroquin,
Manchester resident

Geoffrey Castro
Executive Director, Citizens League for Environmental Action Now (CLEAN)

Juan Parras,
President, Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services (TEJAS)

Rosalia Luera-Guererro
Community Outreach Director, Mothers for Clean Air

Etc.
Enclosure

Cc: Buddy Garcia, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality;
Congressman Gene Green;
Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee;
Mayor Richard Greene, US EPA Region 6;
Charles Lee, US EPA Office of Environmental Justice;
Jonathan Hook, US EPA Office of Tribal Affairs;
Angela Ramirez, US Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

CLEAN needs your signature to demand that the Environmental Protection Agency, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, and the City of Houston immediately enforce the reduction of benzene, 1, 3-butadiene and other carcinogenic emissions.

The citizens of the Manchester neighborhood, in particular, are surrounded by chemical plants and the Houston Ship Channel. They have gone too long living with polluted air and within a polluted community.

CLEAN's mission is to inform and educate citizens about environmental abuses so that they will take action to protect their children, future generations and endangered species.

[illegible]